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Solicitor in Chancery

Also, Agent for the National Life

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Get out your Orders and I will call on you.

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West-Salisbury, Dec. 13, 1866.

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by Root's Ring Bone Cure, for particulars inquire of the Agents.

Middlebury, Nov. 9, 1866.

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Middlebury Register.

VOL. XXXI.

MIDDLEBURY, VT., TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 1867.

NO. 50.

RECONSTRUCTION.

SENATE OF H. R. E. WOODBRIDGE IS
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEB. 18, 1867.

The House having under consideration the bill (H. R. No. 1112) to provide for the more efficient government of the lately

rebelled States, Mr. Woodbridge said:

Mr. Speaker: I think it will be admitted by all that when we adopted the constitutional amendments at the last session of Congress it was with the understanding that upon their ratification by the rebellious States, restoration to the Union and representation in Congress would naturally and perhaps necessarily follow. We went to the country upon that ground and made it an issue in the elections last autumn.

A triumphant and overwhelming majority of the loyal people sustained us. The South, instead of accepting our reasonable and generous propositions, hewed them back upon us with derision and scorn, and regardless of all law, either human or divine, and with a recklessness and hate worthy only of demons, have oppressed loyal men, refused to protect their persons or property; driven them from their homes and their States for no other reason than because they stood by the grand old flag; and, if accounts are true, they have beaten and scourged and murdered the poor freedom, not even a single offender having been punished.

In the condition of things an additional duty is imposed upon Congress, and that is, first of all to provide some means whereby loyal men in the South shall be protected in their persons and property. Under this paramount obligation of the Government to all its loyal citizens the bill introduced the other day by the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. Stevens], called the military bill, was justifiable, and met with my support. However inconsistent with a Republican martial law may be, or however onerous a military government may be, Congress, as the supreme legislative body of the nation, may establish either or both when the safety of the Government or of the people demand it. I was standing upon that ground when the bill was introduced, and gave my vote for members of the convention by which the fifth section provides that when the people of any one of the rebellious States shall have formed a constitution, &c., plainly implying that all male citizens over twenty-one years of age may vote for members of the convention by which the constitution shall be framed; but, sir, does this grant suffrage to all? Not at all sir. It simply grants to all the right which has ever been held sacred in this country—affiliates to the innocent and the guilty—namely, the right of petition. Neither directly or by implication grants suffrage or amnesty to leading rebels.

Still sir I will favor an amendment, if gentlemen consider such an amendment important, providing that no person disqualified from holding office under the third section of the proposed constitutional amendment shall vote for members of the convention elected to form the State constitution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I have shown that under the military provisions of this bill we secure protection to all the loyal people and the question now arises as to whether the bill provides a plan or platform whereby the insurgent States may return to their allegiance and a practical restoration to the Union upon conditions that are just to them and safe for ourselves. I think it does. It provides that the State constitution shall be in conformity with the Constitution of the United States in all respects; that it shall be ratified by a majority of the male citizens of the State, twenty-one years old and upward, of whatever race, color, or previous condition of servitude, who have been resident of the State for one year previous to voting upon the question of ratifying such constitution, except they may be disfranchised for participating in the rebellion or for felony; that the elective franchise shall be guaranteed to the black man as well as to the white man; that the constitution shall be submitted to Congress for examination and approval; that the legislature shall adopt the proposed constitution, and that it shall be ratified by the Legislature of the rebellious States; one is such legislation as